

King fought and died for, and we must do all we can to live and teach his lesson.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 15, 1996, as the Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 17, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on January 18.

Proclamation 6862—Religious Freedom Day, 1996

January 12, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On this day over 200 years ago, Virginia's General Assembly passed a law that created the first legal protection for religious freedom in this country. Introducing his bill to the Virginia Assembly, Thomas Jefferson stated that he was not creating a new right confined simply to the State of Virginia or to the United States, but rather declared religious liberty to be one of the "natural rights of mankind" that should be shared by all people. Jefferson's language was shepherded through the legislature by James Madison, who later used it as a model for the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Americans have long benefited from our founders' wisdom, and the Constitution's twin pillars of religious liberty—its protection of the free exercise of religion and its ban on the establishment of religion by the Gov-

ernment—have allowed an enormous diversity of spiritual beliefs to thrive throughout our country. Today, more than 250,000 churches, synagogues, mosques, meeting houses, and other places of worship serve to bring citizens together, strengthening families and helping communities to keep their faith traditions alive. We must continue to ensure full protection for religious liberty and help people of different faiths to find common ground.

Our Nation's profound commitment to religious freedom reminds us that many people around the world lack the safeguard of law to protect them from prejudice and persecution. We deplore the religious intolerance that too often tears neighbor from neighbor, and we must remain an international advocate for the ideal of human brotherhood and sisterhood and for the basic rights that sustain human dignity and personal freedom. Let us pledge our support to all who struggle against religious oppression and rededicate ourselves to fostering peace among people with divergent beliefs so that what Americans experience as a "natural right" may be enjoyed by individuals and societies everywhere.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 16, 1996, as Religious Freedom Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs, and I urge all Americans to reaffirm their devotion to the fundamental principles of religious freedom and religious tolerance.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 17, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on January 18.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

January 5¹

The President announced his intention to nominate Luis Valdez to the National Council on the Arts.

January 8

At noon, the President attended a Clinton/Gore fundraising luncheon at the Hay Adams Hotel.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr., of San Francisco, CA, during the mayor's swearing-in ceremony.

January 10

The President announced his intention to appoint Stuart G. Moldaw to the Commission on Presidential Scholars.

The President named Evelyn S. Lieberman as Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joel I. Ferguson as a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation.

January 11

In the evening, the President addressed the Ohio caucuses by telephone from the Oval Office.

Later in the evening, the President traveled to Nashville, TN, where he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan.

The President sent a letter to Gov. Parris N. Glendening declaring a major disaster in the State of Maryland due to damage resulting from the "Blizzard of 1996," which occurred on January 6–10, and authorized Federal relief and recovery assistance in the affected area.

The President sent a letter to Mayor Marion S. Barry declaring a major disaster in the

District of Columbia due to damage resulting from the "Blizzard of 1996," which occurred on January 6–10, and authorized Federal relief and recovery assistance in the affected area.

January 12

In the afternoon, the President attended a Clinton/Gore fundraising luncheon at the Opryland Hotel.

In the evening, the President traveled to Aviano Air Base, Italy.

The President sent a letter to Gov. Thomas R. Carper declaring a major disaster in the State of Delaware and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area impacted by the "Blizzard of 1996," which occurred on January 6–12.

The President sent a letter to Gov. George E. Pataki declaring a major disaster in the State of New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by the "Blizzard of 1996," beginning on January 6 and continuing.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released January 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to the President and Director of Legislative Affairs John L. Hilley on the Federal budget

Released January 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff Leon Panetta on Federal budget negotiations

¹ This item was not received in time for inclusion in the appropriate issue.